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To Pentagon Mysterious Satellite Is Just 'Unknown Object' in Sky

By Philip Dodd
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The Pentagon yesterday continued to class the mystery satellite circling the globe as an unknown object.

The Navy even named it "UNK 1-60" for "first unknown, 1960." For tracking purposes, the Air Force called it "1960 Alpha," meaning the year's first satellite, known or unknown.

It was disclosed the mystery satellite first was picked up by the Navy's space surveillance system Jan. 21. Other tracking stations were notified Feb. 2. The Defense Department waited until Feb. 10 before acknowledging an unknown satellite was being tracked.

The Capital continued to be flooded with rumors and speculations concerning the satellite, but every inquiry to the Defense Department brought the reply that "we just don't know what it is."

Spy Theory Discounted

One theory was that the satellite might be a Russian "spy in the sky" a satellite equipped to take pictures of military facilities on the earth's surface and transmit the pictures on signal when it passed over Russian receiving stations.

But even though the Defense Department has said the satellite "probably" is Russian, not much credence was given the spy theory because it is tumbl-

ing end over end 4 times a minute, which space scientists say would prevent picture taking or dependable radio transmission.

Another theory was that the satellite was the empty rocket casing which put America's Discoverer VIII in orbit Nov. 20, 1959. The orbit, around the Poles, is similar to Discoverer VIII's but its apogee—farthest point out—is 1079 miles, 400 miles greater than the Discoverer's apogee.

Air Force Skeptical

A spokesman for the Air Research and Development Command told a reporter the Air Force did not believe the satellite was the Discoverer carrier rocket.

Nevertheless, the Defense Department has described the satellite as "slightly smaller" than a Discoverer carrier rocket, which is 19 feet long and weighs 1400 pounds empty.

The possibility that the mystery object could be one of the Russian lunar rockets returning to the vicinity of the earth also was raised.

Mikoyan Denies New Red Satellite

NEW YORK, Feb. 12 (UPI)—Soviet First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan denied in Cuba today that the Soviet Union has a new "mystery satellite" orbiting the earth,

the Columbia Broadcasting System reported.

"There is no new Soviet satellite. Everything we have put into space you already know about."